

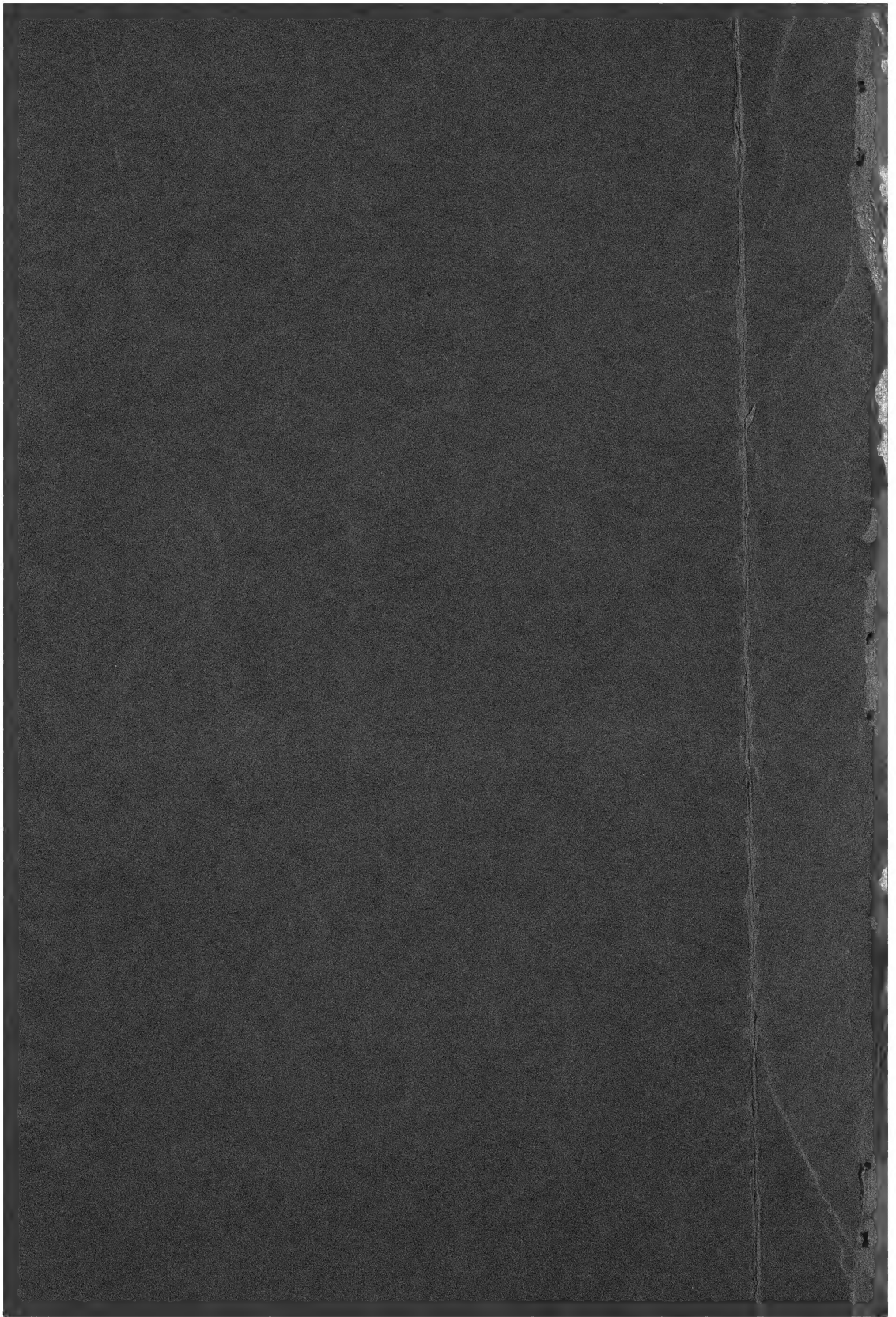
917.1232

Pam 33

cop 2

CANADIAN

20-



A FEW MEMORIES OF WHEN CALGARY AND I WERE YOUNG

BY THEODORE STROM

On the 6th of June, 1886, several other fellows and I arrived in Calgary to help build the Eau Claire Mills and pitched our tent on the bank of the Bow, just west of where the mill now stands. The machinery had all been shipped from Eau Claire in several carloads and, as the American cars could not come through, we had to unload all the machinery and reload it at Winnipeg. This took one week. Everything had to be brought with us at that time for you couldn't buy even a six-inch spike in Calgary.

Our first work here was to unload the machinery.

On our travels through the town we noticed there weren't any pretty women to look at and one fellow, Fred Farrow, said "If there aren't any women here this must be Hell!" Another chap, Charles Hammer, who didn't care for women, said this was the place for him and he would stay. They asked me what I thought about it and I told them it didn't concern me much. This Fred Farrow said if there weren't any girls to kiss he was going right back to Eau Claire. I advised him to stay and told him that kissing the girls was a bad habit anyway. It was like eating soup with a fork; you never got enough.

But there is always a way around if you look for it, and in this case it was easy. We had the native daughters of that day. There were many of them and many lived in Elbow Park, too. They painted themselves just as the women of today do, but they did not wear silk dresses and silk stockings as the young ladies of the present time. They always kept themselves rolled up in a blanket. These blankets had black stripes on them, some having just one, and others two, three, or four. The more stripes these girls had on their blankets, the higher they were in society. So, if a fellow could make friends with a girl with four stripes on her blanket, he knew he had the cream of the land.

At that time there weren't any bridges across the river except the railroad bridges. There was a ferry boat at Fourth Street East, the fare being fifty cents each way, which was reasonable enough, but sometimes when it was in midstream it forgot which way it was travelling. There were very few settlers north of the Bow. In the fall when the water was low we used to ford the river from near the present Seventh Street West to about one hundred feet east of the Hillhurst bridge.

Well, back to the tent again. I was usually the first one up in the morning, and one morning when I went down to the river to get water I saw a nice yellow keg floating there. Not knowing whether it had anything in it, I went out and got it. The contents were tasted and proved to be whiskey. Whiskey was not allowed in those days and, when smugglers saw that they were going to be caught, they threw their loads into the river and then rescued them again as they floated downstream. This was one of these kegs. One man in camp offered me fifty dollars for the keg, intending to sell it in town.

There were several in camp, including the boss, that were opposed to ~~liquid of any kind~~. A conference was held as to what should be done with it. The prohibitionists decided it should be poured down a gopher hole. I felt that it would not have done any harm to have let me have the fifty dollars and responsible human beings have the whiskey instead of drowning poor dumb gophers with it. The whiskey was dumped and the laugh was on me. In my opinion their reasoning was not very well balanced and I told them so.

The first fall we spent driving piles, building platforms, and erecting machinery in the mill which had been built during the summer. Our first logs were brought in from Banff by railroad.

When the water was low in the fall we deepened the channel, dredging the gravel over to the middle of the river from the south side in order to be able to float the logs down to the mill. After the river was frozen solid we started to drive piles for the booms to hold the logs.

The Bow River was tricky then as it is now. Sometimes there was hardly enough water for our boilers, and then there would be big floods that would drive us off the river. There wasn't any Calgary Power Company up the river at that time that could be blamed for the actions of the river, or anyone else interfering with the river, but the trouble was there all the same. We knew he was regulating the weather and winter and summer had its influence on the river. But even in those early days we knew we could not dictate to him, so there was nothing said.

I have noticed in these later years when the Bow River has touched some one's nerves, they open the relief valve and blow through the press, advising the city authorities to get after the Power Company. But the weather and the river pay no attention to that. They run their regular course, and I sometimes wonder if the man in the moon doesn't feel somewhat peeved when the super knowledge nobles are ignoring him and are putting the blame where it doesn't belong. But I guess he is saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do".

We had heard lots of stories of the Indians and what to expect of them, but the scalpers did not come. There was a big Indian camp along the river near Shaganappi and they used to come over where we were working and pick up wood. There was one great six-foot Indian who would walk around and point out the wood for his squaw to pick up and carry. She carried two papooses on her back in her shawl and carried the wood in front. She was so loaded down that she could just wobble along.

Conrad, a big strong man in the gang, tied up a bundle of wood and hung it on the Indian's shoulder to make him understand that he should carry it and not pile it all on the squaw. The Indian took the wood off his own shoulder and hung it, also, on the squaw. Then Conrad took the Indian over to where we were loading logs on a sleigh. While I was lifting one end of the log, Conrad tried to make the Indian lift the other end on to the sleigh, but he would not lift. Then Conrad told the Indian he wasn't any good and to get along. He whirled the Indian around and kicked him in the back.

The Indian started down the ice yelling very loudly, with Conrad following after him, kicking all the time. The squaw with all her load also started to run and yell. I followed up with the team and load of logs and enjoyed it all very much.

About five hundred feet down the river another gang of men were working. They were the prohibitionists. When they heard the racket, they came running to us and telling Conrad to stop chasing the Indians.

When the Indian and the squaw got a fair distance away they turned around and gave us a good talking to, but what they said we did not know. These prohibitionists were the same men that gave my whisky to the gophers and Conrad and I did not have much faith in their judgment. They said the Indians said they were going back to camp to get the rest of the Indians and would come back to scalp us all. The truth is, we all felt

a little uneasy, except Conrad. It didn't worry him. He said if they weren't any better than that Indian he could trim them all. The Indians continued to come for wood, but they kept at a safe distance from where Conrad was.

The boom was finished that winter and we were ready for the drive in the spring of '87.

The first Eau Claire Company drive started in the spring of 1887 and, as it was the first drive on the Bow River, it was a hard one. There were windfalls and obstructions on the river everywhere. It was a very sad affair as six of the drivers were drowned at Kananaskis Falls. The crew were crossing the river in a big boat above the falls, as they had done many times before, but this time the current was a great deal stronger than they had figured on, as there had been a considerable amount of rain the night before. Before they reached the other side they lost control of the boat and were swept fast towards the falls.

There were nine men in the boat and, when they saw that they couldn't make it, they steered the boat right for the falls. The boat jumped the first falls and took in some water. It jumped the second falls and took in more water. When it went over the third falls it went under and six men were thrown out and killed against the rocks before they had any chance to save themselves. The three men who didn't strike the rocks came out without being hurt at all. The bodies of five of the victims were found later during the summer in log jams, but the sixth was never recovered.

It took all summer to get the drive into Calgary that year. It was so cold that there was thin ice on the still water every morning in the early fall and there wasn't much sawing done.

That winter, 1887-1888, the Eau Claire Company built the first traffic bridge over the Bow River. It was built on piles just about where the Hillhurst Bridge is now. There was a land agent in town by the name of Marsh. He persuaded the town to contribute towards the cost of the bridge, and also the North West Assembly at Regina, which was the government for the North West Territories at that time. The Eau Claire Company put in their share and they built the bridge and it was called the Bow Marsh Bridge.

It went out in a flood several years later, after which the Louise Bridge was built. The government was in Edmonton then and Mr. W.H. Cushing was Minister of Public Works. The second bridge was named after Mr. Cushing's eldest daughter, Louise, and that stood till the present Hillhurst bridge was built, which the Hillhurst people wanted named after their subdivision.

In the fall of 1888 the Eau Claire Company drove the piles for the first bridge across the Elbow on Ninth Avenue East where the present stands. A construction company then built the bridge. On the crew that worked on that pile driving job, only three are still alive, -- John Prince, who was the boss, Arnt Foss, who did the firing, and myself, who ran the engine.

In those days Calgary was a very dull place, as there were no places to go. Then finally the Salvation Army came to town. They started their meetings in Boynton Hall on Eighth Avenue East. There were three fine girls that came to open up the meetings, -- a Captain, a Lieutenant, and a Cadet. Their meetings were well attended by men all the time. When the

7

drivers got in, in the fall, there would be about thirty of us altogether who would go down in a body, accompanied by Mr. Brown, an older man, who was our self-appointed guardian.

The officers of the Army were great beggars and were nearly always successful in getting what they wanted, including household goods and so on. One particular time the Captain was asking for a mirror. She said she did not want a small one, but a good-sized one.

Mr. Brown suggested that we, the thirty of us, should buy the mirror and he would present it. We all chipped in and bought a large one that required two men to carry it to the hall. The meeting had already started when we reached there, so we hid the mirror under the steps. At the close of the meeting the Captain asked if anyone had brought the mirror that she had asked for previously. Henry Brown went up to the platform and started to make a presentation speech, and asked some of the boys to go out and get the mirror.

In the meantime, some of us had taken the mirror around to the back. There was quite a good deal of commotion when the mirror was missing, and old Mr. Brown chewed his tobacco harder than ever, which was one of the evils that the army was preaching against. However, the presentation was finally made by one of us who had taken the mirror and hidden it. The speaker, when making the presentation, said he admitted to being a ginner and not a hypocrite like some of the others.

In 1889 the Eau Claire Company started their first light plant, but it was not the first light system in Calgary as there was a small company called the Edison System operating in the alley back of the Bank of Montreal. They had two high speed uncondensing engines belted direct on to two dynamoses and two boilers. These boilers had not been looked after properly and were blistered and burned in the bottom, so the water was running into the fire. There wasn't any boiler inspection at that time. If there had been, they would not have been allowed to run.

Coal was very expensive and it was hard for them to carry on. In the spring of '89 representatives of the light company made arrangements with the Eau Claire Company to furnish them with driving power for their dynamos. The lumber company had lots of sawdust and cheap fuel and were planning to install their own planing mill so they could plane their own lumber, which previously had been done by the Cushing Lumber Company. The necessary machinery was ordered, which consisted of two return tubular boilers, 50 H.P. each, and a 100 H.P. Corliss engine, which was to run the planes in the daytime and the light dynamoses at night. The machinery arrived and was unloaded on First Avenue, where the first Eau Claire light plant now stands.

When the manager of the Edison Company saw the machinery down there, he wanted to know if it wasn't to be installed up town. Mr. Prince explained that that would be impossible as the lumber would have to be hauled up there, planed, and then hauled back, while it was only a small job for the electric company to move their dynamoses down to where the planing mill was to be built. The Edison Company then refused to use the Eau Claire Company power.

The Eau Claire Company now had twice as much machinery as was required to run the planing mill and decided to run a light plant of their own and applied for a charter from the town. The owners of the present light company opposed that and were then willing to bring their dynamoses down to First Avenue, but Mr. Prince had his own plans in mind. The few people

1

1

1

that were using lights, principally stores and hotels, were paying a big price and were anxious to see another company in operation.

D.W. Marsh was the mayor of the town at the time and he called a meeting in the fire hall on Sixth Avenue East. I.K. Kerr, P.A. Prince, and Mr. Moon, president of the North West Lumber Company of Eau Claire, were invited to be present. Mr. James Loughheed, the lawyer, (he was not a senator then) addressed the meeting and said these gentlemen had money to invest and the question was, were they going to invest their money in Calgary or go elsewhere. He thought it was a good thing for Calgary. A man at the back of the room got up and said that it was easily seen that it was easily seen that Mr. Loughheed was being paid for talking that night. Mr. Loughheed waved his hand to the speaker and said, "You are a liar, sir". The man at the back of the room then replied that he would see Mr. Loughheed the next day.

Several of the stockholders of the first company were present at the meeting and raised a number of objections. One was that the new company were going to install a plant carrying 1000 volt current and low voltage. Dr. Gafferty, although interested in the old company, said the safety point was not worth considering as the Eau Claire Company knew better than to put up something that would injure anyone.

Another stockholder of the Edison Company said, "It is well enough to let them start, but where is their money? They have a few wheels down on the river bank that are not worth much, and if we allow them to put poles on the streets, they may go broke and then we would have the poles on our hands". I.K. Kerr and Mr. Moon, who was known as a millionaire at that time, both said they were ready to back Mr. Prince with what money he required and for reference mentioned certain banks in Minneapolis and Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

A vote was then taken, with those in favor of the new company going to the east side of the building and those opposed to the west. The greater part of the audience crowded over to the east side, leaving about a dozen people, mostly shareholders in the first company, on the west side. The mayor declared that the Eau Claire Company should be allowed to start a light plant.

But the road was not yet open for the Eau Claire Company. The first company was having financial trouble and the Bank of Montreal at Eighth Avenue and First Street West had taken it over. The manager of the bank was the directing manager of the light company and he strongly opposed the starting of a new company and demanded that the Eau Claire Company should first prove that its system was not dangerous before being allowed to go ahead.

The Eau Claire Company said they knew nothing about electricity, nor did anyone else in Calgary at that time. The stockholders of the Dynamo Company in Eau Claire and the stockholders of the lumber company were principally the same men, and the Eau Claire Company said they would send for Walter Freeman, the inventor of the system, to come here and explain it. They wrote him and he agreed to come. He said he would discuss his system with anyone in Canada that the citizens wished to appoint.

A meeting was called to be held in the old town hall, an old frame building where the City Hall now stands. Mr. Freeman arrived on the date set. The council chamber was packed but the town of Calgary did not have anyone to oppose him. The manager of the Bank of Montreal asked

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

1

Mr. Freeman to defend his system. Mr. Freeman asked what the charges were against his system. He said he would have to hear the charges before he could defend it.

Then the manager of the Bank of Montreal said, "I can stand in a tub of water up to my knees and take one wire in each hand with my system, but you cannot do that with yours". Mr. Freeman replied, "I will admit Mr. Braithwaite can get into a tub of water to his knees and take a wire in each hand, but he will only do it once with your system. If you put your hand into a circular saw when it is in operation, you will get out. Our system when handled properly is perfectly safe". He then spoke at some length describing his system and the people decided that his system would be the proper one to install.

All these negotiations had taken considerable time and it was now fall. The shareholders of the old company insisted that a date should be set when the new company lights must be in operation. If the lights were not running by that date, their contract would be void.

As they knew that poles couldn't be cut and hauled to the railroad in the short time allowed, they thought they had already won their case. But the Eau Claire Company were also figuring. They sent to Vancouver for three carloads of cedar square timbers, 6 x 12 and 30 feet long. The next week the timbers arrived and, as they had their own sawmills, they ripped the poles diagonally and made two poles out of one, and for the corners they had bigger timbers. That is how all the first Eau Claire poles were square cedar ones.

Mr. Freeman sent his brother here to install the system. They strung wires and wired the houses and had the lights on three days before the scheduled time. When the poles were up the old company complained that they were too narrow at the top. The new company maintained that they would be all right when they got the wires on them. The old company said that they put poles up to hold the wires and not wires to hold the poles.

The first night we started we had all the hotels along Ninth Avenue. Our load was 200 - 16 candle power lamps. As our lights were bright we finally got all the hotels except the Alberta. When the bar rooms were full at night, our lights would go out and the crowds would move over to the Alberta Hotel. Mr. Freeman soon knew there was something wrong and finally they caught two of the old company's linesmen climbing the poles and pulling the transformer fuses. They were arrested, heavily fined, and ordered to leave town. Then things went along fine.

We were carrying 1000 volts on the primary lines and 50 volts on the secondary. No insulation was used except what was on the wire. Entry blocks were out of wood and wooden rosettes and wooden cleats were used. The rates were so much per lamp. The meter did not come into use till the system was changed to 2200 volts.

As time went on we got more and more business. Our lights were good and the old company's were weak in power. The old company carried on for some time, finally sending to Eau Claire for a dynamo the same as ours. After installing their new dynamo they were able to take over the bad customers that the Eau Claire cut off. Previously our lights would not work on their system.

But we had more trouble with our poles. Mr. Prince was called to a council meeting to hear complaints about the unsightly poles, and was asked if he would paint those on Ninth, Eighth, and Seventh Avenues.

Mr. Prince said, "Oh, certainly I will paint them," and inquired if that was all that was required of him. One of the councillors said, "Yes, that is all. Mr. Prince had agreed to paint the poles". Mr. Prince picked up his hat and walked out. As he was leaving, he said, "I never said, when mind you. I will paint the poles when I am ready". He never got ready and they were never painted.

Both companies operated for some time and then finally the first company had to shut down. We had only the one machine and were carrying about the right load. When the old company went broke applications kept coming to get on our system. We were already running to capacity, so, when the old company finally gave up, notices went out from the Eau Claire Company that the price of lights would be raised.

There was a great kick about that from the people. Quite a number could not afford to pay the new rate and had the lights cut out. Those who had to have lights had to pay the price. While the people were complaining the company said, "When we are able to make as much money carrying 500 lights as 1000, we would be very foolish not to take advantage of it.

In the early days there were no unions or government regulations in regard to labor. Long hours and low wages was one of the Eau Claire Company's ways to success and when the old company went out of existence they had the advantage of being the only ones in business. They raised the price of lights considerably but did not raise the wages of their employees.

As time went on, they found that they did not have enough power to carry their load so decided to start to build a water power plant. There were certain rights that they had to get from Ottawa but some of the Calgary citizens were opposed to that and the late Dr. Lafferty and two other men were appointed as a delegation to go to Ottawa to oppose the granting of the charter. When the delegation arrived in Ottawa they were told that Mr. Loughheed had made all the arrangements a month previous.

In 1893 the water power plant was started and we got two wheels running that fall. It was only in operation a short time. The dam running over to the Hillhurst Fire Hall was not built at that time and when winter came we were short of water. In the spring when the river opened up the two wheels were started again and ran successfully.

In the fall of '93 when the water was low we built the Hillhurst dam. The Bow River then showed its tricks, although there was no one up the river interfering with it at that time. We had all our scaffolding built across the river to carry our pile driver and engine and were just starting to drive our solid work. The weather had been fine but it had been colder up west than it had been in Calgary. There had been a big ice jam up the river somewhere that had held the water back. As I remember it, it was on Thanksgiving Day at about three o'clock in the afternoon and we were working on the river, when a wall of water and ice five feet high came sweeping down on us.

We all ran for shore as fast as we were able to. The ice jam took all the false work except the span where the pile driver and engine were standing. The flood handled the big 34-foot square timbers as though they were matched. As nothing more could be done that day, the boss said we could go and have our Thanksgiving dinner.

The next morning a crew of men and teams went down each side of the river and rescued the timbers. It took a week before we could get started again and then the river flooded once more. It interfered several times before we got the dam across.

We ran through that winter successfully with our water power. With only two wheels it did not require a great deal of water to run them. But the load kept increasing and more power was needed so more wheels were added until we had seven. The wheels and machinery worked fine, but the water proposition was a different thing. When the water came to Calgary we managed to help it along but when it jammed up west we couldn't do anything but wait till it came through, which sometimes took a week. We were then running with both steam and water. The steam plant always worked perfectly but when the river ran dry some of the lights would go out as the steam plant could not carry them all.

The business lights were kept going but the residence lights were left off till the water came up again. The voltage was supposed to be fifty volts but sometimes the lights were pretty dim. The customers complained but no rebates were made. The only thing that could be done if the service was not satisfactory was to have the lights cut off.

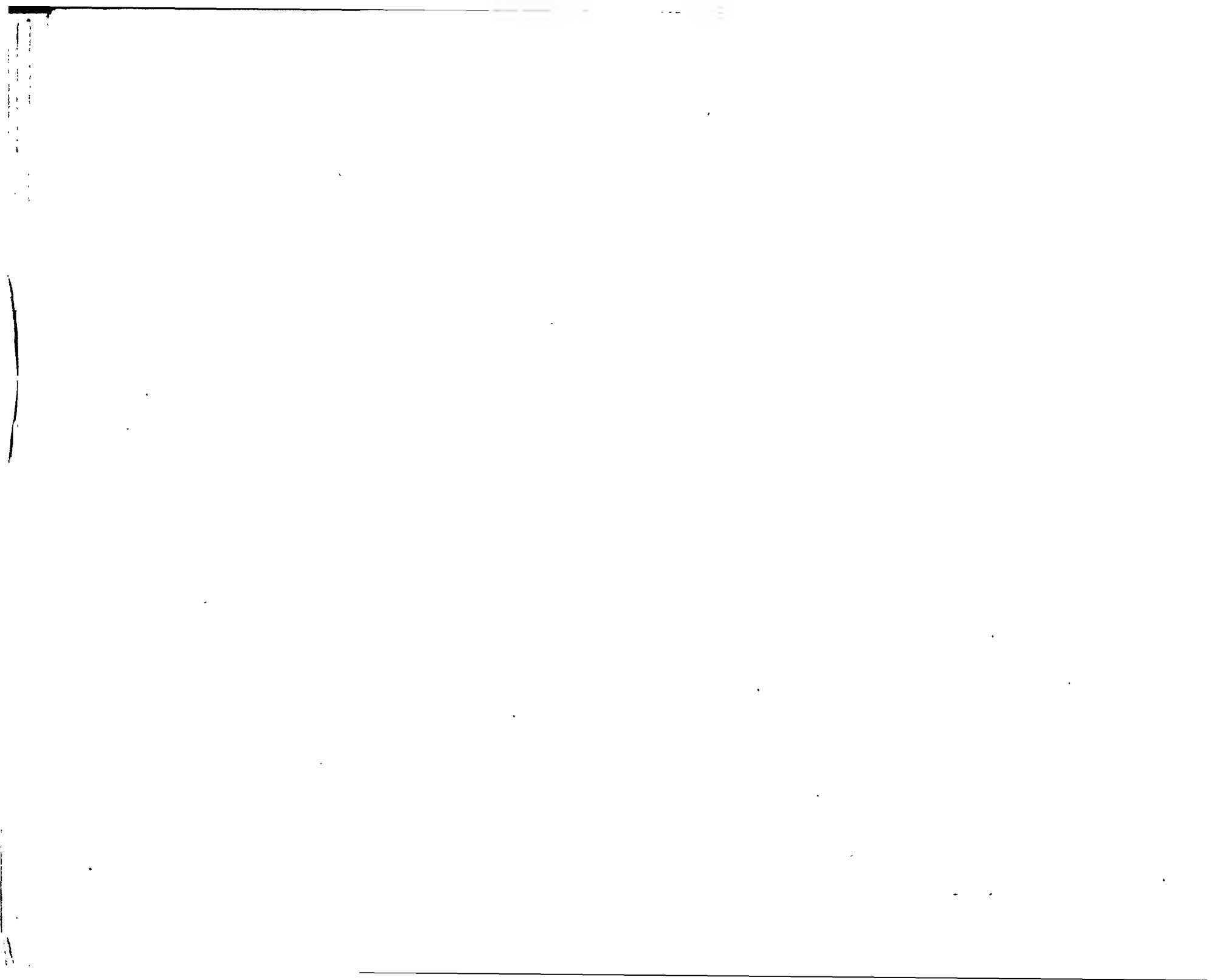
I remember coming into the Eau Claire office one day when R.B. Bennett was there. He turned to me and said, "Your lights were pretty poor last night, Theodore. I could hardly find my bed". The manager spoke up and said, "Theodore couldn't help it. We had an ice jam somewhere on the river last night and we were short of water". Mr. Bennett said, "Short of water, that's funny; the lights looked as though they had too much water in them".

On another occasion the late Dr. Mackid drove down to the water power plant with his horse and buggy (there were no cars in those days) and complained about the lights as they were so dim. I told him that we were doing all that we could there and that he had better make his complaint to the manager. Dr. Mackid took the manager up to his house to look at the lights and was told that they were all right, but that he did not have enough of them.

The Bow River has caused me a lot of trouble since my arrival in Calgary. As near as I can remember, it was in the spring of 1894 that we had our biggest flood. The whole of Sunnyside and the flat on the south side of the river were under water. All that could be seen of Prince's Island were the tree tops. The Bow Marsh bridge went out in this flood.

There were some families living along the river between Second and Third Streets East. The men were away working and the women came down to the Eau Claire office and asked Mr. Prince what they should do. Mr. Prince told them to stay right in their homes and he would put a man on to watch the river and their homes. Orders were given for two teams to be hitched up in the barn and a half dozen men who were sleeping in the bunkhouse were to be ready if they were needed to move the families.

As our water wheels were standing in dead water, I was sent to watch the houses with instructions to go for help if the water reached the threshold. Between two and three o'clock that morning the water began to play on the doorsteps, within half an inch of going into the houses. Then part of the bank washed away and the water started to drop. The houses were now about forty feet from the edge of the river.



There was one house on the north side of the Bow. It was about 500 feet northeast of the present Hillhurst bridge and was occupied by Mrs. McHugh and her family. Several Mounted Policemen were sent to watch that house and moved the family out early in the morning when the water was almost into the house. Mrs. McHugh protested against being moved until the water actually started coming into the house but the police officer insisted as he said when the critical time came they might not be able to move them.

Two or three years afterwards the Bow River flooded again, to be followed quite a number of years later by the flood that took out the old Centre Street Bridge.

One night a fellow called Louis and I had worked all night long on the river helping the ice and water along. At six o'clock in the morning when people were beginning to get up and wanting to use the lights, the water stopped coming. The water power lights were off again. It was heartbreaking to have worked all night long and then at daylight to be left helpless. To keep our spirits up for the next struggle if the water should come through again, this somewhat foolish conversation took place.

I said to Louis, "Do you suppose there is any danger of us being taken down into the lower basement, before Lucifer the prince of darkness, to be checked up on our miserable service". Louis thought there was and said that was what the place was for, to purify the evil doers, but that they would take our bosses first and that they had lots of money. I said, "But there won't be any money there and I don't suppose Bennett will be there to explain their privileges under the law and that they will have a hard task to excuse themselves, and then, what then? Louis just said, "Amen".

I have been arrested and taken for a thief only once in my life and that was in connection with that miserable river. It was a very stormy night and we had a gang of men working on the river. About three o'clock in the morning one man came and awakened me and said they had to have some help quickly. He went right back to his job and I dressed as quickly as I could and started for the river, putting my overcoat on as I was running along.

As I came to the Third Street crossing, I saw a man coming along but paid no attention to him. However he was a policeman in civilian clothes and, as I was passing him, he grabbed me by the collar and said I was under arrest and that I was to go to the police station with him.

That winter coats had been stolen from Dr. Lafferty's house., the Braemar Lodge, and several other places and now the policeman thought that he had caught the coat thief. I tried to explain to him what I was doing and asked him to come up to the river with me or to the power house to see some of the boys. However he insisted that we go back to the house that I came out of and, after being identified by my wife and told that it was my own house that I came out of and my own overcoat that I had on, he let me go.

Thomas English was the chief of police at that time and when I saw him the next day I told him what had happened. He had a good laugh and told the rest of the police force about it. They teased the life out of the one who had tried to arrest me, as he was coming from visiting his girl. The girl, I guess, was teased also, because she would not speak to me after that. Entertaining a beau till three o'clock in the morning

was considered quite a crime in those days. Times have changed. The modern miss can entertain her beau till three in the morning and no one is interested.

I recall some visits to our early customers. At that time there wasn't any one doing electrical work and no material was obtainable without sending to Winnipeg. All work and repairs had to be done by the company.

There was a well-known lawyer who lived in a bighouse on Fourth Avenue West. He had a very snappy wife. She had been one of Calgary's first lady school teachers. They were going to have a big party and sent to the company to have some extra lights put in for the occasion. It so happened that there was no material on hand and, as the train only arrived twice a week from Winnipeg, the required supplies arrived after the party was over. When it did arrive the fellow called Louis and I were sent to install the new lights.

On our way up Louis remarked that the lady of the house certainly would be wild. When she met us at the door she called the company a bunch of North American Chinamen and a number of other things. She said the company should keep on hand what the people needed and what they were paying for. As what she said was true, Louis and I had nothing to say in our defence.

Finally, Louis thought that we had had enough of a lecture and said to the lady, "If you want your lights fixed, you will have to keep your shirt on". She looked at him with great surprise and said, "Keep my shirt on! I would just like to know who is going to take it off!" Louis said he would, and then she started to laugh and the quarrel was over.

The customers generally came to the office to pay their bills. There were some bad accounts and their bills were given to a collector that worked on commission. If he failed to get the money then we were given the bill with instructions to get the money or cut off the lights.

There was a house called the Chapman Boarding House south of the track. The proprietor of that place was a pretty bad customer. to get money out of and we were sent to get the money or cut her off. She claimed that she had paid for all the fixtures and ran down the company in general. We agreed with everything she said, not crossing her at all. She complained that the lights were not in the right place. We lengthened her cords and put her lights where she wanted them, cleaned the lamps, and spent about an hour altogether, agreeing with everything she said.

The first company was still running at this time and their wires were just outside on the same pole as ours. Our lights were on the transformer system and so would not work on their lines. We knew that, but she did not. We figured we would get the money the next day. As we were leaving we told her we would have to cut the lights off or we would lose our jobs and offered to notify the other company to connect her up so that she would not be without light that night. Then she said, "You are the nicest boys I have ever met", and paid us the money.

That is the way it worked a good many times. By jollyng the customers along, we did not have a great deal of trouble getting the money.

One time I did not get the money, though. I was sent to a woman who kept a coffee shop on Eighth Avenue near Centre Street. The bill was for

1

\$27.00, and I had strict orders to get the whole amount or cut her off the line. When I gave her the bill she took \$20.00 out of her stocking and said she would give me that if I would receipt the bill in full and leave the lights on. I told her that it was impossible for me to do that but that I would enquire at the office if they would accept that amount. She put the money away again and said, "Oh, no, both you and your company can go to Hell". That night she left town and that money was lost to the company altogether.

In the spring of 1904 we changed the old system of 1000 volts to 2200 volts. The company installed two Babcock and Wilcox water tube boilers. They were the first water tube boilers that came into the West. They also put in a Robb Corliss engine with generator of 360 K.W. Then we were in a position to carry on whether the water power was running or not.

At this time meters were installed in all the houses, where the flat rate had been in use before. I remember the first meter inspector that came to Calgary. I do not remember his name, but he was a middle-aged man with black whiskers. He was passing through the town and just stopped off to inspect the Eau Claire meters. As the company had no spare meters, the meters had to be removed from the houses and brought down to the plant and then installed in the houses again on the same day, which meant a lot of work.

A place was fixed up in the repair shop adjoining the engine room. They wired up one side of the wall and put in a lot of switches. When the meter had been hooked on and the switches thrown in the whole wall took fire. The short circuit made an awful noise. I ran from the engine room to see what the trouble was. The meter inspector had taken his instruments and was running towards town. Our old friend Louis and his helper were putting out the fire.

This happened about eleven o'clock in the morning and we thought the inspector would be back in the afternoon to finish his job, but he never came back. We didn't know anything about inspecting meters and I don't think this man did either. The meters had all been brought in new from the factory so I do not think there was anything wrong with them. Louis said that was a good way to get rid of a troublesome beggar.

We had been running twenty-five arc lights for the town under a five-year contract. This contract was now up and the town wanted fifty lights instead of the twenty-five. The Eau Claire Company would not agree to supply these without another five-year contract as it meant the installation of more machinery. The town would only give a one-year contract, so the town was forced to put in their own plant which they did in 1905 when they installed two water tube boilers and a Robb engine on Ninth Avenue West where the present substation is. The town added to and operated there until about 1911 or 1912, when they moved to Victoria Park.

When the town of Calgary started to operate a light plant the price of light went down and the taxes went up. It did not affect the Eau Claire business though as they kept adding more steam machinery as the load kept getting heavier. Of course, they had to reduce their price to the level of the town price. The steam machinery always worked well and, as we did not have to depend on the Bow River, our service was second to none and we always carried a full load.

When we changed to the 2200 volts the transformers and sockets on the old service all had to be changed as the voltage on the lamps had been 50 volts and, with the new system, it was increased to 110 volts. We had to do it gradually, running with both systems for a while.

17

17

17

17

17

17

17

17

17

17

We went to make the change at a house on the south side of the tracks where one of the C.P.R. officials lived. We had changed all the sockets on the lower floor and went upstairs to do the bedrooms. Louis went into one room and I opened the door to another, where I saw the daughter of the house, a girl of about 22, standing in front of the mirror combing her long hair. They all had long hair in those days.

I noticed that she had very few clothes on, so pulled the door shut again to give her a chance to get dressed. The girl's mother, who was talking to Louis across the hall, came over and opened her daughter's door and said, "Go right in". The old lady came in and sat on a chair at the foot of the bed while I went on changing the socket.

When we had finished all the sockets in the house we changed the transformer outside and then went into the house to see if everything was working all right. When we went into the kitchen the girl was fully dressed and was then helping her mother put some cake and tea on the table. They asked us to have some tea with them.

I recall going into a high-class boarding house to fix a light. It was quite late in the afternoon and the daughter of the house, a girl of about twenty, was helping two other women to get the supper ready. The girl told us the light to be fixed was upstairs and that her mother was up there and would show us where it was. We opened a door at the top of the stairs and there the girl's mother and a government official were sitting on a couch with their arms around each other sound asleep.

We went downstairs again and told the daughter that we could not find her mother and would come back the next day to fix the light. The daughter said the light had been out two nights then and they were paying for it and wanted it fixed. She said she would show us where it was. When she opened the door and saw her mother she turned very red in the face and said that it would be better to leave it till the next day.

We went in the next day about the same time and the lady of the house was very much awake then. She showed us up to the room and we had the same lecture over again, about the light having been out three nights now and they were paying for it. We told her then that we had been in about the same time the day before. Louis pointed to the couch and said, "You and your friend were over there in Paradise". She blushed and asked if we really had been there. We said we had and she said, "Accidents will happen in the best regulated families". Louis replied that he knew that as well as she did.

There were quite a few cattle thieves in the early days, but the late Paddy Nolan dreed most of them. I recall one day when we were down at the Royal North West Mounted Police Barracks fixing lights in the log stables as they were then. We had the Buckboard with the tools and some wire in the back.

As we were leaving to go home for our dinner, Mr. Nolan came out of the court room (court sessions were held in the barracks at that time) and asked if he might ride up town with us. We told him he was very welcome. He said he was so nervous that he could hardly walk and that we would be better company than that which he had just left. He had been prosecuting some notorious cattle thieves and got them convicted. He said he preferred to defend and not prosecute, but in this case the Cattle Association had paid him to prosecute and he had done his duty. He said "Drive to the Alberta and we will have a horn".

I was driving and Mr. Nolan sat down on the seat beside me. Our old friend Louis, stood up at the back. He took Mr. Nolan's green law bag and was a lawyer, I guess. We drove up Stephen Ave., as 8th Ave. was called then. The people on the street seemed to enjoy the sight. Mr. Nolan and I didn't pay any attention, but occasionally Louis waved to some of his acquaintances.

We got to the Alberta and Mr. Nolan paid for the drinks and thanked us for the lift, and said he hoped he would be able to do us a good turn sometime. There was a well known business man in the bar at the time, and he remarked that we would not need Mr. Nolan's assistance, and that if all men were as harmless as we were, it would be hard times for Mr. Nolan. Mr. Nolan agreed but said he still liked to show his appreciation when done a favor.

The first mayor of the Town of Calgary was George Murdock, and the first Chief of Police was Jack Ingram. The first prisoner in Calgary's own jail was a powerful cowboy from one of the ranches who was called Nigger John. Whenever he came to town, the whole town knew it. The Mounted Police jail had always been used before, but the Town of Calgary had put up some sheds in front of where the City Hall is now and one of these sheds was used as the first town jail.

One evening after considerable trouble, they captured Nigger John. The Chief of Police went home for his supper and later went back to see how the prisoner was getting along. The corner of the roof of the shed had been raised and the prisoner was gone.

It has been said to me by different parties and on several occasions that, if they had been here in the early days, they would have had a million dollars now. Getting a million is a big job. I know several that started out to get it, but they didn't succeed very well. Some of them went to jail, some to Ponoka, and some hurried on into eternity and the gophers are now using their valuable holdings as a playground. Well I haven't got a million but I have what is better. I have always been able to pay my way and I still enjoy the best of health. I have a clear conscience and a proud mind as I haven't got anyone's money.

THE END

Juniper Hill,
Mickleham,
Surrey.

10th September 1940.

Dear Theodore,

Through the kindness of Mr. Anderson I have received a copy of an article written by you for the Calgary Water Power Company's staff magazine.

To say that I was interested is putting it mildly, for your article recalls to my mind many incidents with which I was familiar, both interesting and amusing. It does seem a pity that so few who lived in those colourful days left any written record of their recollections and reflections. This mechanized age does not afford to men the happy and carefree life of the old days of which you write, and I am not prepared to say we are the better for it.

These are serious times in the history of our Empire. It is idle to predict what the future may hold, but of this I am certain, there will be no surrender in these Islands. There had been a grave lack of foresight on the part of many of our statesmen, but the people themselves are displaying high courage and fine spirit in the face of enemy air attacks. Our airmen are putting forth Herculean efforts, with marked success, and should invasion come it will be resisted to the utmost. I am confident no Peace proposals will ever receive consideration until the threat of Hitlerism is once and for all disposed of.

I hope you are well, and that life will continue to afford you that tranquility of spirit which your writings indicate you have achieved.

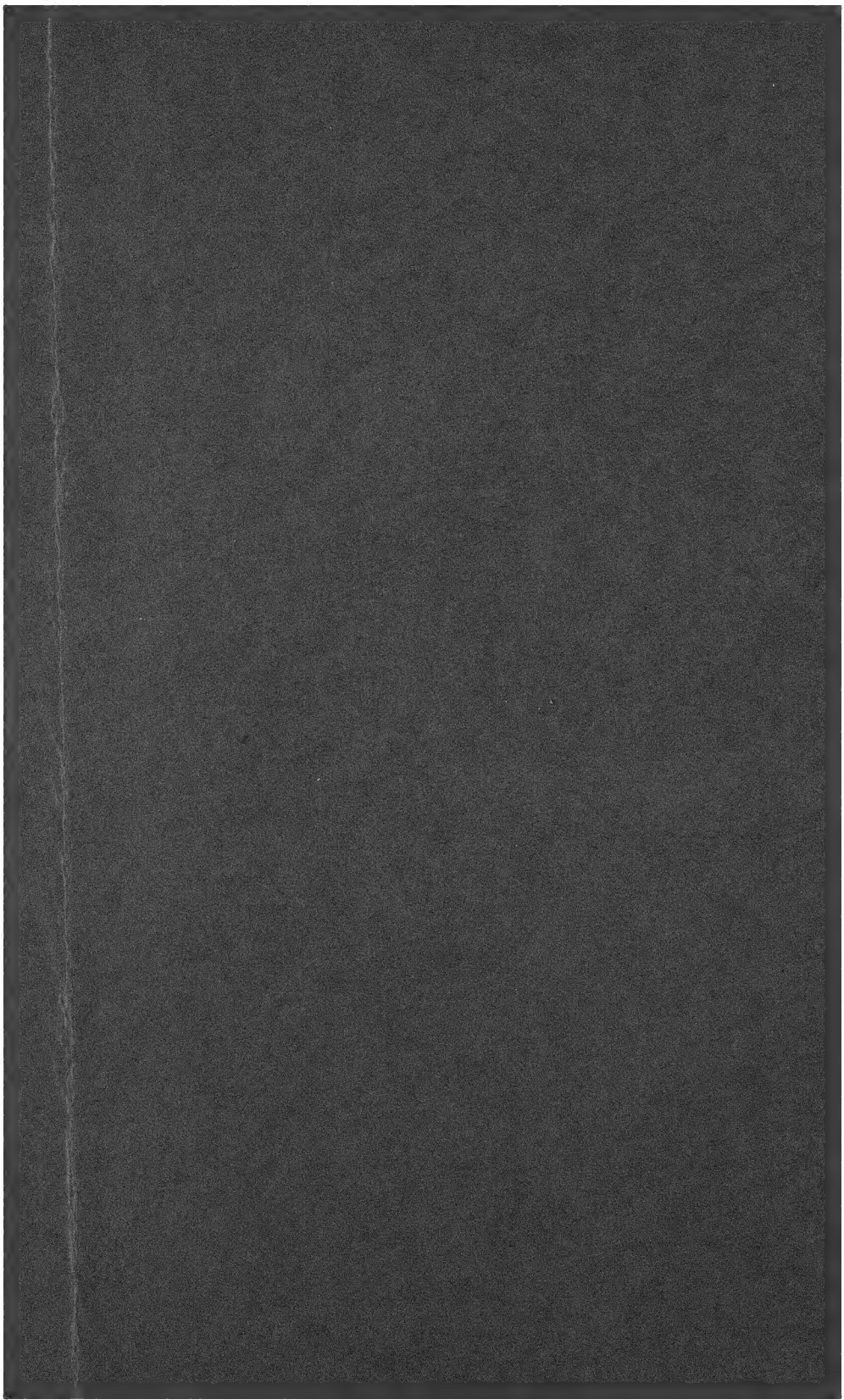
With kindest regards and all good wishes, I am

Yours faithfully,

R.B. Bennett.

Mr. Theodore Strom,
c/o Calgary Water Power Company,
Calgary, Alta.,
Canada.





10 MAY 54

7-12 54

13 54

5 MAY 54

8 APR 54